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BOOK NOTICES.

Ferguson's Ceylon Handbook and Directory, 1905-6. xi and 1364 pp. and Index. A. M. & J. Ferguson, Colombo, 1905-06. (Price, £1.)

The present edition of this excellent hand-book is, as usual, filled with practically every kind of information to answer all sorts of inquiries about this remarkable island. The most novel and, for the world at large, the most interesting pages in this edition are those devoted to the rubber-planting industry—for Ceylon is doing more than almost any other region to demonstrate the practicability of rubber cultivation. The frontispiece is a photograph of Pará rubber trees taken in the Government gardens at Henaratgoda. The trees have grown to large size; and though the oldest and largest of them (28 to 29 years) are not shown in the picture, it gives a good idea of the thrift of the Pará rubber tree in Ceylon.

Rubber-planting began twenty-nine years ago; but, at first, little attention was paid to Pará or Mexican rubber, as the hardy Ceará nearly monopolized attention. In recent years a great deal of interest in the Pará rubber tree (*Hevea Braziliensis*) has developed. Until 1898 rubber-planting was represented by only about 750 acres; but by the middle of 1901 the acreage was about 2,500, and in June, 1904, there were 11,000 acres. Planting has gone on with remarkable rapidity during the past year, and the estate returns show nearly 40,000 acres. It was at first estimated that not more than 10,000 acres in Ceylon would be available for Pará rubber, but it is now known that the range will be much more extensive. In 1903 the tree was flourishing at a height of over 3,000 feet, and it is now doing well up to 4,000 feet. The crop of 1893 was 2,792 pounds. It kept increasing every year, till in 1904 it was 77,212 pounds. The crop of half of 1905 was 51,520 pounds.

John Chinaman at Home. Sketches of Men, Manners and Things in China. By the Rev. E. J. Hardy. 335 pp., numerous Illustrations and Index. Imported by Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906. (Price, \$2.25.)

The author was a chaplain for three and a half years in the British forces at Hongkong. From time to time he was absent on leave in China, and during his sojourn in the country he observed and heard everything he could about the habits and customs of the people. The first six chapters contain descriptions of some of the leading cities—Hongkong, Tientsin, Peking, Canton, Swatow, Amoy, Foochow, and of journeys on the West and Yangtse Rivers. Fully three-fourths of the book is given to the life of people, their food, medicines, clothes, houses, gardens, servants, betrothal and marriage, death and burial, boys, girls, education, manners, the Government, religions, superstitions, and other topics, including missionaries. The book is filled with incident, and the simple and interesting style in which it is written is well adapted to leave a vivid impression of the everyday life of the Chinese.

We appear to the Chinese, in all respects, to be as singular and eccentric in our customs as they have appeared to many of us. When we criticise the Chinese for worshipping their ancestors, they retort that we worship our wives. The

Chinese strongly objects to being looked at through glasses, and the native wearing spectacles who does not remove them when a visitor comes into his room would be thought very rude. The Chinese accuse us of morbid unrest; they say we do not live, because we are so intent upon increasing the means of living that we are always discontented. How can we put either milk or sugar in our tea when they destroy bouquet and flavour? The writer goes below the surface of many things Chinese, and we are not only introduced to the aspect of life among them but also learn something of the philosophy which underlies their doings and prejudices.

Heroes of Discovery in America. By Charles Morris. 344 pp., 12 Illustrations. J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1906. (Price, \$1.35.)

Unfortunately, this book seems to have been prepared without the geographical instinct that seizes upon the most significant and vital facts and without sufficient striving after accuracy. An author who presents Robert E. Peary and Roald Amundsen, at present the most-talked-of Arctic travellers, as "Robert B. Peary" and "Roald Amundsen" has only himself to blame if his facts are thought to have been compiled with inadequate care. Such statements as this: "Amundsen forced his vessel across the Northwest Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific" are of little value. Whereabouts was this channel he followed? For any intimation this book gives about the matter Amundsen's route might have been north instead of far south of McClure's.

The Euahlayi Tribe. A Study of Aboriginal Life in Australia. By K. Langloh Parker. With an Introduction by Andrew Lang. xxvii and 156 pp., 6 Illustrations, Glossary and Index. Archibald Constable & Company, Ltd., London, 1905. (Price, 7s. 6d.)

Mrs. Parker's contribution to the study of the manners, beliefs, and legends of the Australian aborigines is the result of her observation from childhood of the Euahlayi tribe in the northwestern part of New South Wales. She had unequalled opportunities for the study of the women and children, in which respect the male scientific observer is usually at a great disadvantage. The Australian natives are regarded "as the most backward of mankind, having no agriculture, no domestic animals, and no knowledge of metal-working. Their weapons and implements are of wood, stone, and bone, and they have not even the rudest kind of pottery. But though the natives are all, in their natural state, on or about this common low level, their customary laws, ceremonials, and beliefs are rich in variety."

None of Mrs. Parker's informants had ever been under the influence of missionaries, and yet these primitive people, in a limited and modified form, hold a belief in reincarnation, and have other ideas and usages that are deserving of close study. Mrs. Parker's intimate acquaintance with them gave her a great advantage in collecting their legends. She says that if the inquiring white is a stranger a legend will be told him as quickly as possible, and in a half-contemptuous way, as much as to say, "What do you want to know such rubbish for?" But if the native *raconteur* knows the visitor well, and feels that he is really interested, the stories will be told as he would tell them to his family, giving them a new life and adding considerably to their poetical expression.

Mrs. Parker has some unusual advice for missionaries. She believes that before they go out to teach they should acquaint themselves with the making of